

**SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION
POLICY MANUAL**

SERIES: 300. Academic Affairs

SECTION: 301. Program Award Level Definitions, Requirements, and Exceptions

POLICY: 301.1. Program Award Level Definitions and Requirements

EFFECTIVE: July 1, 2021

A. PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this policy is to define program award level definition and requirements for a short-term certificate, long-term certificate, diploma, and associate of applied science.

B. DEFINITIONS

1. Short-Term Certificate

- 1.1. A short-term certificate award develops and validates the necessary academic, technical, and employability competencies for students to enter the workforce immediately following award completion and/or articulate into advanced education and training opportunities. A short-term certificate program may include general and technical education courses.
- 1.2. An award that requires completion of an organized program of study¹ at the postsecondary level designed for completion in less than 300 clock hours, or in less than 9 semester credit hours².
- 1.3. A short-term certificate award is conferred upon the successful completion of the program of study prescribed for the program.

2. Long-Term Certificate

- 2.1. A long-term certificate award develops and validates the necessary academic, technical, and employability competencies for students to enter the workforce immediately following award completion and/or articulate into advanced education and training opportunities. A long-term certificate program may include general and technical education courses.
- 2.2. An award that requires completion of an organized program of study at the postsecondary level designed for completion in at least 300 but less than 900 clock hours, or in at least 9 but less 30-semester credit hours³.
- 2.3. A long-term certificate award is conferred upon the following requirements:

¹ Program of study is defined as the outline of courses within a program.

² Adapted from: U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Data Systems (IPEDS). Retrieved September 2, 2020, from <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/public/glossary>.

³ Adapted from: U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Data Systems (IPEDS). Retrieved September 2, 2020, from <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/public/glossary>.

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- 2.3.1. A student must complete the program of study prescribed for the program.
- 2.3.2. A student must demonstrate a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0 using a four-point system.

3. Diploma

- 3.1. A diploma award develops and validates the necessary academic, technical, and employability competencies for students to enter the workforce immediately following award completion and/or articulate into advanced education and training opportunities. A diploma program includes both general and technical education courses.
- 3.2. An award that requires completion of an organized program of study at the postsecondary level designed for completion in at least 900 but less than 1,800 clock hours, or in at least 30 but less than 60-semester credit hours⁴.
- 3.3. A diploma award is conferred upon the following requirements:
 - 3.3.1. A student must complete the program of study prescribed for the program.
 - 3.3.2. A student must demonstrate a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0 using a four-point system.
- 3.4. Each diploma program must include a minimum of six (6) credit hours of general education courses. A student must complete a minimum of one (1) course from two (2) of the following categories:
 - 3.4.1. Communications;
 - 3.4.2. Social sciences;
 - 3.4.3. Mathematics;
 - 3.4.4. Computers;
 - 3.4.5. Arts and humanities; and
 - 3.4.6. Natural sciences.

⁴ Adapted from: U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Data Systems (IPEDS). Retrieved September 2, 2020, from <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/public/glossary>.

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4. Associate of Applied Science

- 4.1. An associate of applied science award develops and validates the necessary academic, technical, and employability competencies for students to enter the workforce immediately following degree completion and/or articulate into advanced education and training opportunities. An associate of applied science program includes both general and technical education courses.
- 4.2. An award that requires completion of an organized program of study at the postsecondary level designed for completion in 1,800 or more clock hours, or 60 or more semester credit hours⁵.
- 4.3. An associate of applied science degree is conferred upon the following requirements:
 - 4.3.1. A student must complete the program of study prescribed for the program.
 - 4.3.2. A student must demonstrate a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0 using a four-point system.
- 4.4. Each associate of applied science degree program must include a minimum of 15 credit hours of general education courses. A student must complete a minimum of one (1) course from four (4) of the following categories:
 - 4.4.1. Communications;
 - 4.4.2. Social sciences;
 - 4.4.3. Mathematics;
 - 4.4.4. Computers;
 - 4.4.5. Arts and humanities; and
 - 4.4.6. Natural sciences.
- 4.5. A student completing an associate of applied science program of study must possess a high school diploma or equivalency certificate.
- 4.6. An associate of applied science degree program must have a minimum of 50 percent of credit hours in technical education.

⁵ Adapted from: U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Data Systems (IPEDS). Retrieved September 2, 2020, from <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/public/glossary>.

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- 4.7. An associate of applied science degree program may include an associate of applied science option.
 - 4.7.1. An associate of applied science option develops and validates a specialized set of competencies within an associate of applied science program. An option within an associate of applied science constitutes part of the total program of study but is considered a specialized focus.
 - 4.7.2. An associate of applied science option involves less than half of the total technical education credits in the associate of applied science program of which it is a part, with the remaining credit hours taken in common by all students in the program⁶.
 - 4.7.3. An associate of applied science option is transcribed upon completion.

C. POLICY

- 1. The Board of Technical Education may grant exemptions to cases in which a program must comply with specific standards established by accreditation, regulatory entities, licensure requirements, or for other reasons.

D. PROCEDURES

- 1. The executive director shall promulgate procedures needed to implement this policy.

⁶ Adapted from: Higher Learning Commission's *Addition of a Program Concentration or Specialization* definition. Retrieved September 2, 2020, from <https://www.hlcommission.org/Accreditation/institutional-change-academic-programs.html>.

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SDCL REFERENCE: [13-39A-14](#); [13-39A-16](#); [13-39A-17](#); [13-39A-18](#); [13-39A-21](#)

ARSD REFERENCE: [24:59:01](#)

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